

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2501

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 23, 2006

Title: An act relating to clarifying that coverage for mental health services as defined in RCW 48.21.241, 48.44.341, and 48.46.291 applies to all group health plans for groups other than small groups as defined in RCW 48.43.005.

Brief Description: Regulating group health benefit plan coverage of mental health services.

Sponsors: Representatives Schual-Berke, Cody and Morrell; by request of Insurance Commissioner.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/09/06, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/22/06, 2/23/06 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Deccio, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Brandland, Franklin, Kastama, Kline, Parlette and Poulsen.

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: Mental health parity legislation passed in 2005 requiring health plan coverage of mental health services under certain terms and conditions. The legislation was intended to exempt small group plans, but failed to include reference to the definition of small groups under existing law.

Summary of Bill: The mental health parity law is amended to include the reference to the existing definition of small groups.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This is a technical correction addressing an oversight in the bill passed last year.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Beth Berendt, Office of the Insurance Commissioner; Len McComb, Washington State Hospital Association.